

QUALITY ASSURANCE TIPS

- **INITIALS**
 - **LANGUAGE AND TEMPLATES -**
 - **ACCEPTANCE LETTERS**
 - **UPFRONT GLOMARS**
 - **PARTIAL GLOMARS AT END OF CASE**

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Standard Acceptance Language

The CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 431, as amended, exempts CIA operational files from the search, review, publication, and disclosure requirements of the FOIA. To the extent your request seeks information that is subject to the FOIA, we accept your request and will process it in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act. Unless you object, we will limit our search to CIA-originated records existing through the date of this acceptance letter.

Use most of the time....only two exceptions.

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Modified Acceptance Language

The CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 431, as amended, exempts CIA operational files from the search, review, publication, and disclosure requirements of the FOIA. To the extent your request seeks information that is subject to the FOIA, we accept your request and will process it in accordance with the FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, as amended, and the CIA Information Act. We will search for records existing through the date of this acceptance letter.

Use this version when:

1. Requester is seeking a known CIA document.
2. Requester objects to limiting to CIA originated.

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Dual PA/FOIA Request

We have assigned your request the reference number above. Please use this number when corresponding with us so that we can identify it easily. With regard to Items **xxitem numbersxx**, that portion of your request for records on yourself falls under the purview of the Privacy Act and has been addressed via separate correspondence under **xxPrivacy REFNOxx**.

Change to the following for Third Party Request (FOIA handled by PA Branch)

We have assigned your request the reference number above. Please use this number when corresponding with us so that we can identify it easily. With regard to Items **xxitem numbersxx**, that portion of your request for records on XXX has been addressed via separate correspondence under **xxF REFNOxx**.

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Searches (Overly Broad)

The CIA, whose primary mission is the collection and analysis of foreign intelligence, has a vast amount of records in a variety of offices and files that are indexed and therefore retrievable under the name of a specific country or region of the world or under a broad subject of public interest. An overly broad search would locate a vast quantity of records, much of which would be extraneous, mentioning the subject of the request only in passing, thus being of little or no value to you. Further, the review of such records would impose an excessive and unreasonable burden on the Agency, and pursuant to relevant precedent, we must decline to process such requests.

Geographical location

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Searches (Vague, Burdensome)

Your FOIA request cannot be accepted in its current form, because it would require the Agency to perform an unreasonably burdensome search. The FOIA requires requesters to "reasonably describe" the information they seek so that professional employees familiar with the subject matter can locate responsive information with a reasonable amount of effort. Because of the breadth and lack of specificity of your request, and the way in which our records systems are configured, the Agency cannot conduct a reasonable search for information responsive to your request. We encourage you to refine the scope of your request (such as including a time frame for, and narrower, more specific descriptions of, the information you seek) to enable us to conduct a reasonable search for responsive information.

Most topics fit best using this language.

Remember to take out time frame if requester has provided one.

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Previous Release and Ops file

We conducted a search of our database of previously released records that contains copies of documents released over the years to thousands of other FOIA requesters. Searches of this database, consisting of over 500,000 pages, can be accomplished very expeditiously (since no review is required) and at little or no charge. We located the enclosed [# of DOCs] documents which we believe to be responsive to your request. Please be advised that these documents were released as part of another release program.

With regard to any other information concerning the subject of your request, please be advised that if any information responsive to your request, should it exist, would be located in operational files. The CIA Information Act, 50 U.S.C. § 431, as amended, exempts CIA operational files from the search, review, publication, and disclosure requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

Verify documents were released from another program, if not delete sentence or edit to accurately reflect situation.

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Searches Overly Broad with Previously released material

The CIA's primary mission is collecting and analyzing foreign intelligence. The Agency has a vast amount of records in a variety of offices and files indexed and, therefore, retrievable under the name of a specific country or region of the world or under a broad subject of public interest. An overly broad search would locate many records mentioning the subject of the request only in passing. These extraneous and non-responsive records would be of no value to you. Reviewing them would be an excessive and unreasonable burden. Federal courts permit agencies to refuse to process such requests.

In an effort to assist you, however, we searched our system of previously released documents and located the enclosed records consisting of xxxnnxx pages. We found these records as a result of previous requests for information concerning various subjects.

If the information enclosed is not sufficient and you wish to pursue your request further, we ask you to specify particular subjects and provide a time frame for your interest. If you have a short deadline, it would be beneficial if you would limit your request to finished intelligence since this would be more likely to result in the greatest release of information to you, providing that any releasable information exists.

Verify documents were released from another program, if not delete sentence or edit to accurately reflect situation.

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Examples of using previous request to fulfill your current request. Must tell requester we have searched.

1. Same Subject, providing documents

In response to an earlier request on the same subject, searches have been conducted in our records systems. Accordingly, we searched our database of previously released records and located the enclosed XX documents, totaling XXX pages, which we believe to be responsive to your request. Please be advised that some of these documents were released as part of another release program. We have provided the best copies available. Since you are entitled to the first 100 pages free of charge, the total cost to you is \$XX.XX for copies at the rate of ten cents per page. Please send a check or money order in this amount payable to the Treasurer of the United States citing reference number F-2009-XXXXXX to ensure proper credit to your account.

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2. Same Subject, providing requester report

We conducted an earlier search on behalf of another requester for records on the same subject as yours. Accordingly, we searched our database of previously released records that contains copies of documents released over the years to thousands of other FOIA requesters. Enclosed is a listing of documents available on XXXX. If you would like to order documents from this list, please clearly mark those you want and return the entire listing to us. Document copies will be provided at a cost of ten cents (US\$.10) per page less the first 100 pages to which you are entitled free. Please do not send payment in advance as the page counts are not always accurate. We will bill you at the time we provide the documents you choose. At that time, we will ask you to make your check payable to the Treasurer of the United States.

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3. Subject is similar, providing documents

We have previously conducted searches on behalf of earlier requesters for records relating to the topic [similar subject] of your request. Therefore, we searched our database of previously released records and located the enclosed XX documents, totaling XXX pages, which we believe to be responsive to your request. Please be advised that some of these documents were released as part of another release program. We have provided the best copies available. Since you are entitled to the first 100 pages free of charge, the total cost to you is \$XX.XX for copies at the rate of ten cents per page. Please send a check or money order in this amount payable to the Treasurer of the United States citing reference number F-2009-XXXXXX to ensure proper credit to your account.

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3. Same Subject, NRL

We conducted an earlier search on behalf of another requester for information on the same subject. No responsive records were located. Although our searches were thorough and diligent, and it is highly unlikely that repeating those searches would change the result, you nevertheless have the legal right to appeal the finding of no records responsive to your request. Should you choose to do so, you may address your appeal to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

***Must give appeal rights with a DIF determination as well.**

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FEES – SPR – Need Commitment

For your information, the FOIA authorizes federal agencies to collect fees for records services. You will note on the enclosed fee schedule that we charge search fees, including computer time where indices are computerized, and copying costs for releasable documents. Search fees are assessable, and you will be charged, even if our search results are negative or if we determine that no information is releasable under the FOIA.

[Insert any additional fee-related paragraphs here, before the final paragraph below.]

Before we can begin processing your request, we must receive your commitment to pay all fees incurred under the conditions stated above. We will hold your request in abeyance for 45 days from the date of this letter pending your response.

If a requester mentions fees in their letter, change “For your information,” to “As you are aware,”

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**Always verify the accuracy of the information
in the templates as it relates to your particular
scenario. Such as:**

Singular or plural

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Example: Not a proper FOIA request, however popular topic/frequently requested

For your information, the FOIA does not authorize or require federal agencies to answer questions on behalf of requesters. However, in an effort to provide some assistance to you, we have searched our database of previously released records that contains copies of documents released over the years to thousands of other FOIA requesters. Enclosed is a listing of records on XXXX. If, after reviewing this list, you decide you want copies of documents, please mark those items you want and return the listing to us. Document copies will be provided at a cost of ten cents per page, less the first 100 pages to which you are entitled free. Please do not send payment in advance as the page counts are not always accurate. We will bill you at the time we provide you with the documents you choose.

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Final - releasing documents/document

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request and located material which can be released in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions xxxxx. Additional material was determined to be currently and properly classified and must be withheld in its entirety on the basis of FOIA exemptions xxxxx. An explanation of exemptions is enclosed. You may appeal my decision to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

We completed a thorough search for records responsive to your request. One document can be released in segregable form with deletions made on the basis of FOIA exemptions xxxxx. Additional material was determined to be currently and properly classified and must be withheld in its entirety on the basis of FOIA exemptions xxxxx. An explanation of exemptions is enclosed. You may appeal my decision to the Agency Release Panel, in my care, within 45 days from the date of this letter. Please include the basis of your appeal.

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Tidbits

Do not need a fee commit for “news media” or “educational” fee category.

Do not SPR and ACC in the same letter.

Do not place requester in a fee category when providing previously released documents.

Do not need to quote time frame of search if we are not accepting.

Do not Glomar until final letter. (Cases involving more than 1 item.)

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- **REFERRALS AND COORDINATIONS
FROM OTHER GOVERNMENT
AGENCIES, NARA, AND PRESIDENTIAL
LIBRARIES**
- **TEMPLATES**
- **REVIEW OF FINAL LETTER LANGUAGE**

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- OPENING PARAGRAPH ON General Correspondence Language (opening paragraph)
- Sample Final letter on referral
- Sample Final letter on a coordination
- Sample Final letters involving a referral and a coordination
- NARA
- Two letters
- LIBRARIES
- PARAGRAPH THREE FOR NARA
-

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(b)(3)

National
Security Act

- UNCLASSIFIED
- FULL-TEXT COPIES
- GRANT CODES VS RELEASE DECISIONS ON DOCUMENTS
- GIF/GIP/DIF LANGUAGE
- TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES
- COPIES OF LETTERS TO OTHER AGENCIES
- FINALS CHECKLIST HANDOUT

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INITIAL FINALS:

- What does the requester want? What did we agree to?
- Does the final letter clearly state documents to be released in full, released in part, denied in full, referred to another government agency (when appropriate) or a partial glomar included (from component on acceptance letter)?

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- Are the denier(s) and exemptions used stated at the end of the letter? Any previously released documents?

Processing Cases with a NRA/NRL/DIF Grant Code

The QA review process for these cases is similar to the one stated above. The main difference is that there aren't any documents going out to the requester. However, there may be documents going to another other government agency or previously released documents that were retrieved. In the case of a Referral be sure to

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inform the OGA to respond directly to the requester.

- **REFERRALS AND COORDINATIONS**

- **Ensure that the original letter and set of documents is intact as received from the other agency. It helps QA to solve a lot of problems upfront. Verify documents in file against those scanned in. We have found instances where pages were not scanned.**

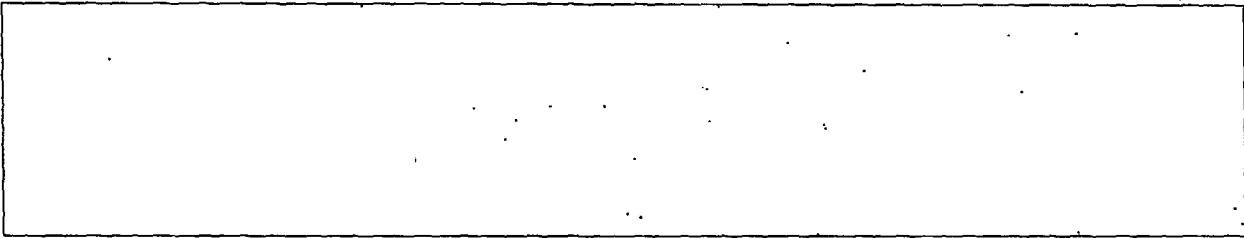
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- General Correspondence Language (opening paragraph)
- Final letter on referral
- Final letter on a coordination
- Final letters involving a referral and a coordination
- NARA
- LIBRARIES
- **PARAGRAPH THREE FOR NARA**

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National
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Act

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- 
- **UNCLASSIFIED**
- **GRANT CODES VS RELEASE DECISIONS ON DOCUMENTS**
- **GIF/GIP/DIF LANGUAGE**
- **TEMPLATES AND EXAMPLES**
- **FINALS CHECKLIST HANDOUT**

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NOW YOU'RE AN EXPERT
AND YOUR CASE IS PERFECT!!!!

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